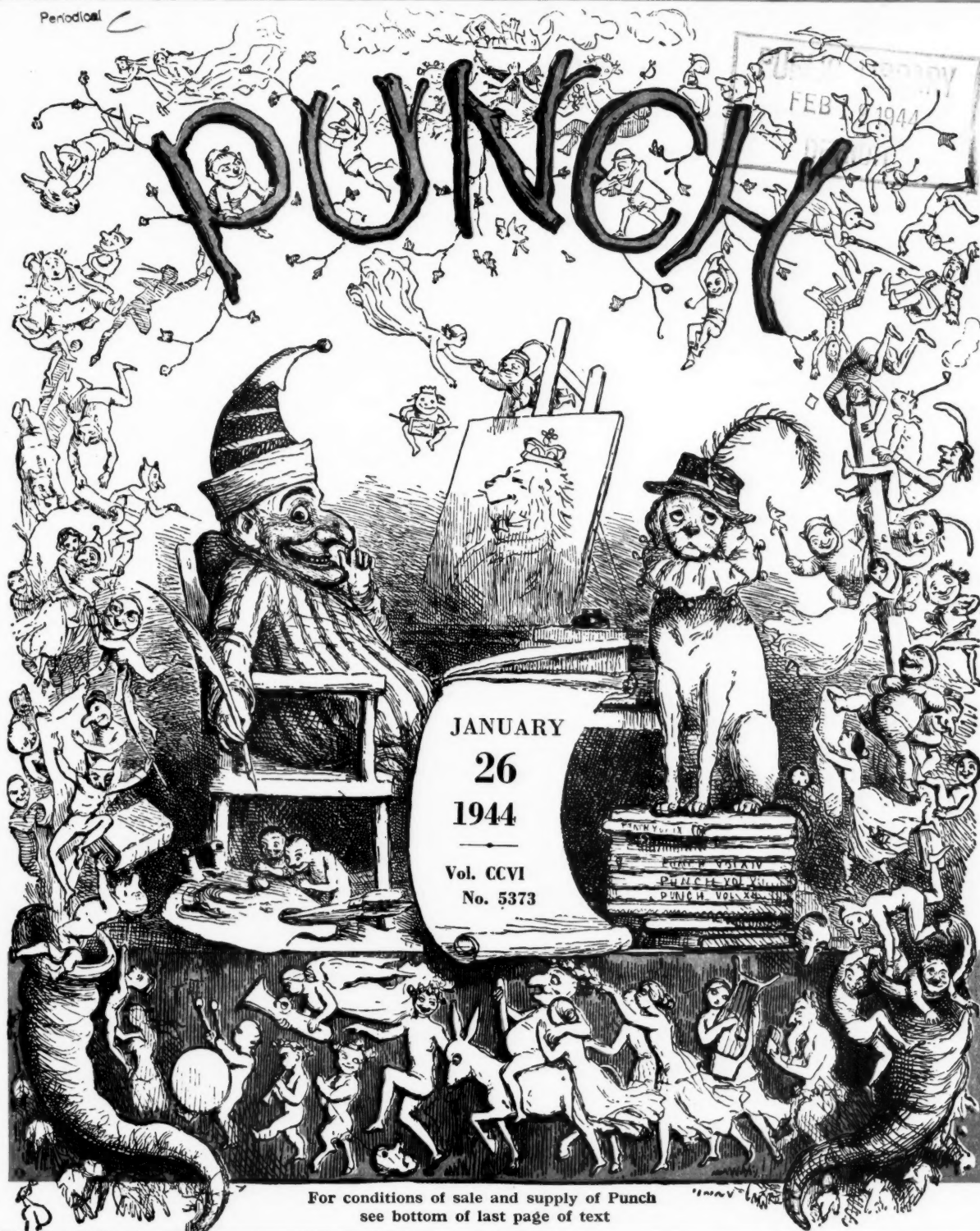


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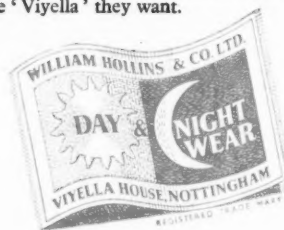
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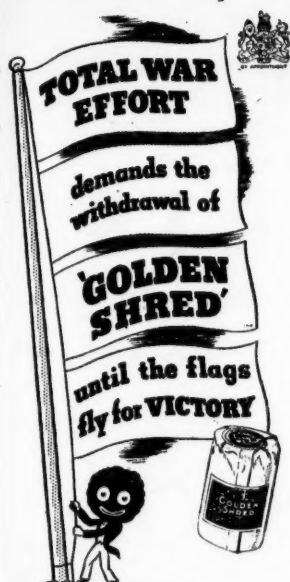
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'Absence makes

Well, you know the rest. Fortts BATH OLIVER Biscuits are still on sale in the shops. But supplies are restricted owing to wartime conditions. When peace is here you will again be able to have all you want.

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CLEANLINESS.—Protect the enamel finish by washing off fruit juices, vinegar, milk or onion with hot soapy water. When dry use a cream polish.

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Here's hoping for quite a number of things, including fewer restrictions and more Old Angus—one of life's many amenities made scarce by war. A timely request for Old Angus is sometimes rewarded.

A NOBLE SCOTCH
—Gentle as a lamb



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ANGUS**

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Our Prime Minister's oft-quoted phrase, "Never have so many owed so much to so few," is now historical, but what of the Many? That great army of British working men and women.

Keyed up to the highest pitch, combined with increased weariness due to continuous employment at maximum hours, it is not surprising that the number of accidents tend to increase.

Believing that "Prevention is better than cure," the Midland Employers' with their specialised knowledge of industrial dangers and many years' experience of dealing with workmen's compensation, now offer the results of that experience to their policy-holders, and will readily advise upon measures necessary to reduce the number of man-hours lost owing to industrial accidents.



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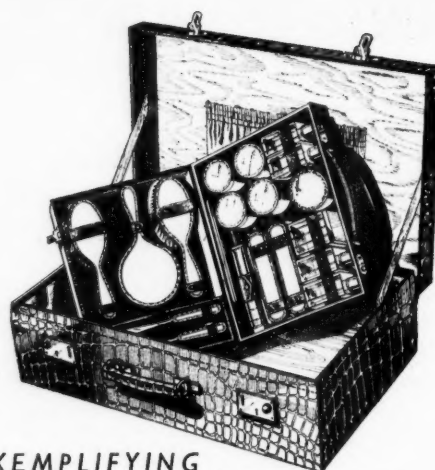
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EXEMPLIFYING FINNIGAN QUALITY

Fitted dressing cases of superb craftsmanship and design are still available in limited quantities.

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Craftsmen in Leather since 1830

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Until then . . . When victory comes . . . when the gates of the prison camps have been opened . . . British prisoners of war will come streaming back to freedom. Until then, the Red Cross and St. John parcels make all the difference to their daily lives—help them to bear the privations of captivity. Enter for the

£250 RED CROSS RADIO CONTEST

in aid of the Red Cross Penny-a-Week Fund.

The Contest will be broadcast in the Forces Programme on Saturday, February 5th, and re-broadcast on Monday, February 7th.



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In 1 oz., 2 oz., 4 oz. & 8 oz. Bottles



PUNCH

Or
The London Charivari



Vol. CCVI No. 5373

January 26 1944

Charivaria

A SHOPPER informs us that some excellent bargains have been available in the January sales, many of them at little more than twice-price.

"Your January weather doesn't agree with me," says an American visitor. And when we had weather forecasters it didn't always agree with them either.



One of the new popular songs was, we read, written by a doctor in his surgery. No doubt the publisher had to get the local chemist to set it to words.

A food hint in a German paper says that an onion eaten raw is very comforting in the cold weather. This is known as Joy Through Strength.

"ALAS! THOSE CHIMES.—The City Council decided on Wednesday that instructions be given for the chiming of the Town Clerk to be restored."—*N. Wales paper.*

We hope he's a bit mellower now.

Jet planes are expected to bring America within the ordinary man's reach. In fact going there after the war will be like visiting London now.

A soldier was observed to be fast asleep in his stall at a London theatre. It appears that he is on leave after two years' service abroad with Ensa audiences.

Many members of the Gestapo in Germany have been arrested. When two gave themselves up it was found that each had been sent out individually to arrest the other and both decided it was best to go quietly.



The Ministry of Agriculture denies the rumour that some of the bigger farmers are starting their own pulping mills.

With the advent of the new Mustang the *Luftwaffe* will probably be faced with the necessity of providing fighter cover for their fighters.

In military circles it is feared that Hitler may score a great defensive victory by retreating before the invasion actually starts.

To counteract our new jet-propelled machine the German scientists are said to be very busy on a secret propeller that doesn't need an aeroplane behind it.



By all accounts the German High Command has to work hand-in-glove with the Propaganda Ministry. Generals on the Eastern front often get a little quiet fun from sketching out their daily communiqué before Goebbels has sent it to them.

In view of the publicity afforded to advances in domestic research, we are reminded that most husbands are still anxiously waiting for someone to prove that tobacco ash is good for linoleum.

Indoor games have increased greatly in price. In some districts darts are now over a shilling a pint.

"LINES and Wrinkles. Trial pot. 1/9. (Also Grey Hair.)"—*Advertisement.*
You can sell *anything* nowadays.

A famous Viennese brain specialist is reported to have joined Hitler's entourage. He had never previously undertaken such a delicate operation.

Schooldays

THE millionaire Globrich whom I often meet is not only fond of boasting that he never received any education as a boy; he has a positive distaste for the thing.

"Show me an educated man," he says, "and I will show you a fool." One could comment on that remark and say that it took many centuries of education to enable the mind of Globrich to mould it, and his tongue to utter it, but the comment would be lost upon Globrich. He does not care to argue about phrases. When I tell him that the war will soon be over he invariably answers "Though, mark you, I think Hitler may have something up his sleeve." When I burst into tears as I always do on hearing this statement he cannot understand the reason for my great grief. He thinks it is mere timidity. I once went down on my knees in the hall of his club and begged him not to say at any time during the lunch which he was proposing to give me that the Germans were a tough nut to crack.

"Because if you do," I said, "I shall have a nervous breakdown."

But he did not understand. It is better to talk to Globrich about education and the post-war world.

"I learnt all I know," he tells me, "in the hard school of life. I had no book-learning in any shape, sort or form whatsoever. And here I am at the age of sixty-five—"

"Sixty-seven," one corrects him, "according to *Who's Who*."

"There you go with your arithmetic. Sixty-five or sixty-seven, it's all one to yours truly. I never had any time for sums when I was a youngster. The ten fingers of my two hands were plenty good enough for me."

"Many people," one reminds him, "have only eight."

"Scholarship," he cries again contemptuously, "Pah!"

And when one asks him whether he has not sometimes regretted, as the director of so many huge financial concerns ranging from glue to railways, his total inability to read or to write—

"Read?" he says. "Why should I read? There are plenty of people to do that for me. Write! Haven't I got hundreds of stenographers?"

He waves his hands a good deal from side to side as he says these things, and one has a vision of huge offices and polished desks and a multitude of slaves called up to do his bidding by the mere magic of those ten fingers which are all he uses to count their numbers and compute their weekly salaries.

He then goes on impressively "While you were learning to read and write what do you think I was doing? I was herding pigs, selling newspapers, running errands, holding horses' heads. It was years before I had a farthing in my pockets. But when I did get one I knew what to do with it."

This always confuses me, so that I choke a little over my soup. Why didn't they ever give him any farthings for so long? What was the current rate for holding horses' heads when Globrich was a boy? Did he ever lose any of those pigs after a recount? And where did the newspaper-selling come in? I try to imagine that it was an agricultural newspaper, offering a pig to every registered subscriber who arrived on horseback. But how then did Globrich keep his register?

And meanwhile I hear him saying "If I'd wasted my time as you did reading a lot of musty books at school, God bless my soul, do you think I should be where I am to-day?"

That of course is the problem. Would he be? And where is he? And has God in any marked degree blessed his soul? After all he is giving me lunch, and somebody, I suppose, since he cannot read the bill, will tell him what to pay and he will take a glittering handful of farthings out of his pockets—and then I have a sudden idea.

"If all education were totally abolished," I suggest, "I suppose we should all be Globriches."

He seems to think it possible.

I attempt to envisage a world of Globriches. It is a bright and beautiful world but I detect an economic fallacy in the scheme.

"But then we should have no clerks and stenographers," I point out rather cleverly, and he is forced to admit that viewed from this angle compulsory education may indeed be a blessing in disguise.

"The thing to do is to escape it. You were one of the lucky ones."

"I had a spirit of adventure, let us say."

"Some people believe that the great adventures are those of the soul."

I should like to put down the answer that Globrich gives me to this rather pious observation. But it is one that he must have learned, I think, a long while ago while holding horses' heads or driving his pigs afield. I now have another idea.

"If everybody had to be educated, and well educated, there would be no Globriches at all."

"That's right."

But it is now nearly three o'clock and I have to say thank you, and go away, leaving Globrich to pour out several thousand farthings on the pay-desk while he puffs at his cigar. The dilemma is too hard for me, but it is one that each succeeding President of the Board of Education has to face. If he had caught an infant Globrich, would he have known what to do with him? Would he have stuffed his mind with arithmetic until the poor lad was reduced to becoming a mere clerk? Would he have taught him to read and write until culture had left him with no better brains than those of a stenographer?

Unhappy Board of Education! It has to steer between Scylla and Charybdis all the time. Much money has been spent on my education and most of it in vain. None has been spent on Globrich's and look where he is to-day. Still at his club, very likely, and smoking a second cigar. Possibly all the years of our childhood should be spent in selling newspapers and herding pigs, and education should be regarded as a kind of solace for those who have failed out of that adventure to become plutocrats. At any rate when I learned that Globrich had recently endowed a new Chair of Philosophy at one of the senior universities I knew the reason only too well. He was afraid of competition. The more people he could arrange to educate, the better for him. A millionaire with a more generous outlook would have endowed a Chair of Hippodamology, and given the young men a chance. To send his sons to Harton (and he did this also) was merely parental cruelty.

EVOE.

Manstein Stern First

"Berlin reports to Stockholm say that Hitler has seen Manstein in Southern sector of Russian front. Manstein flew back to front same day, says Moscow radio."—*Stop-press column*.



TAKING BACK THE REINS

"Plenty of luggage, I see, as usual."



"To-day we'm going to prang Long Meadow—Daisy will take 'ee to dispersal points."

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

XVII

IT is pleasant to be off the gracious west coast of Newfoundland again, ambling southward in one of the Government steamers. These small ships have a large place in the life of the island. For the northern half (having no roads or railways) they are the only way to the World. By steamer come your stores, your raw materials, your groceries, your guests, your Government officials, your bottle of rum; by steamer you go to hospital, to the railway, to the airfield, to the capital. When a steamer is held up for a day or two by fog or foe, by storm or accident, it is like the stopping of the Underground—except that you cannot go by any other route: for hundreds of miles the plan is changed and the patient Newfoundlander

waits. So the arrival of the steamer is a big event. Everybody turns out on the little jetty to meet—But I go too fast. Let us get out to sea again.

The coast is high here, a wonderful range (in the colour sense as well as the geographical) of greens and purples, fringed with innumerable islands and split by innumerable arms and inlets. (Newfoundland is a bit larger than Ireland but has a coast-line of six thousand miles.) George and I—it is good to be with George again, by the way—keep saying that it is like Norway, though neither of us has ever been to Norway. From time to time a tuna (or tunny fish) disturbs the blue surface. The coast of Labrador, across the Straits, is fading. Suddenly

we turn to port, thread our way through a labyrinth of islands, creep under high cliffs, where you could make the *Queen Mary* fast to a tree, and come into a wide bay, dotted with tiny settlements, or "out-ports", with the big green hills behind them. The bay is enchantingly pretty—the water like Cornwall (except for the big whale wallowing placidly in the middle), the hills like Norway (George says), the villages like Switzerland or an Italian lake. Every house is of wood, and every church: and, since you can paint wood in any colour you like, the distant view is gay and varied. The coloured churches, with their brave wooden spires, always dominate the picture, partly because of their greens and reds and purples and blacks, and partly

because in nearly every community, however small, there are three of them—Catholic, Anglican and "United Church". Below the churches and the white wood houses, the fish-plants and warehouses stand on legs in the water, which is as clear as your bath. Two grand old schooners lie at the wharves unloading, and somewhere, you may be sure, there are a few acres of split cod drying in the sun.

Well, we steam across the lovely water, "blowing" to announce our approach, and flying all the flags in the International Code to show that George is aboard. We charge at the little wooden jetty at a speed which must surely be fatal to the jetty, but our captain, a man of rare skill, who may call at thirty settlements like this in a day, tinkles his telegraph at just the right moment, and we do not break an egg-shell.

Everybody, as I said, is on the jetty, all the boys and girls, all the fishermen who are not fishing, the merchants and store-keepers, looking for freight, the Magistrate and the Ranger (if they happen to be here) and all the three parsons and the Salvation Army commander. But no Mayor, you will observe—no Mayor and Council.

This is a big event, quite apart from the arrival of George. This is the last steamer but one that will come into Bay before the ice closes it for the winter. Winter stores are being gathered already. And Mrs. Pomeroy has come safe back from hospital, two hundred miles away: and Mr. and Mrs. Pilgrim are going to sail with us on their honeymoon. And at last the steamer has brought the missing piece of machinery that will set the new fish-freezing plant in motion; and a relief for the Salvation Army commander, and mended wireless sets, and some rum from the Government store at St. John's.

Great event, great excitement; but I hope I have not suggested a great crowd. For in truth, in this small settlement there may not be more than two or three hundred inhabitants—perhaps much less. Yet there are three churches up the hill, and, under their wings, three denominational schools—besides the Salvation Army. But no Mayor, no Council, as I have said. And what is more, no policeman. Or fireman.

In that brief statement several important island facts are inextricably entangled. Let us fumble for one or two.

Local Government is quite unknown in the small "out-ports", and almost unknown in the island (there are only two Mayors in the whole Dominion). The Distinguished Visitor is met

The Winter Comes.

THE Winter comes, as come it must.

Our simple sailors put their trust
Not only in their daily tot
Of Navy rum to keep them hot,
Nor wholly in the morning gin
To hold the central heating in.
Though alcohol procures a glow
Does it rebuff the ice or snow?
Can artificial stimulants
Compete with heavy underpants?
The answer's in the negative.
It's only woollen goods that give
Complete protection (which they need)

To naval ratings (Nelson's breed).

So up, ye knitters! Up, and knit
A scarf, some gloves (and see they fit),

Sea-boot stockings, helmets, too,
As long as they're in Navy blue.
But if you lack the wool, or skill,
Please write a largish cheque and fill

It in to PUNCH'S COMFORTS
FUND;

Address it "Bouverie St., London, E.C.4." And may we plead
That he gives twice who gives
with speed?

everywhere by the Magistrate (an officer of the Government), or the Ranger (a fine force in khaki, akin to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but Government servants likewise), never (or twice only) by a man who can say "I welcome you as an elected representative of the people."

So, for one thing, in these wooden hamlets, swept by high winds, with no "water-supply" (in our sense), there

is hardly ever the beginnings of an organization against fire.

But be not too hasty in judgment. Let us have a tug at another puzzling strand. "No policeman," I said. Well, the Magistrate and the Ranger are here to-day; but they are here to meet the Members of Parliament. They have perhaps thirty settlements like this on their "beat"; and they will not be here to-night. So to-night, not here only, but all round the island, the citizens, perhaps two hundred thousand of them, will sleep without an officer of the law for miles, without anyone whose duty it is to take cognisance of robbery or murder.

But the Newfoundlanders have a simple answer. They say "But we do not commit robbery and murder." And that is the extraordinary thing—they don't. A murder in Newfoundland is as rare as a suicide in church. It is perfectly true that they do not seem to need policemen, as other mortals do. And from that, I think, they tend to argue that they don't need mayors or councils—or firemen.

But why don't they need policemen? Well, then, we go back to where we began, for they point, some of them, to the three coloured churches up the hill, and the three denominational schools beside them. It is a principle "established by law in this colony" * that you cannot get any Government money for education except through one of the denominations. This seems odd to us, and to some of the Newfoundlanders. But the others, when you speak about the policeman, speak about "the proof of the pudding". It is all very interesting and rather insoluble: and at the moment I shall say no more; for George says that dinner is nigh, and I have an appetite like a sea-horse.

A. P. H.

* Education Act



"This is the most realistic Assault Course of the lot."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

II

AMOS hated to be interrupted when he was talking about one of his favourite subjects, the ancient Roman emperors. He knew little about any of them, but his enthusiasm for them (in bulk) was considerable. He used to startle casual strangers at the bar by suddenly calling out "Three jeers and a toga for the ancient Roman emperors!" and once when a man who had some connection with a new City company kept interrupting his eulogies of them by talking about it and finally said that full particulars would be found in *The Times*, Amos snarled "Ah—on the sports page, I suppose, under 'Rackets'."

On such occasions Amos came very near to orthodox profanity, which he usually scorned. Broadly true, nevertheless, is a remark I have often heard him make: "Not to quote Gilbert, Sullivan, or Shaw, I never said a pyg, pyg malion."

One of the company was engaged in writing a biography of a personage Amos much disliked, and had been talking for some time of the epigraph he meant to put on the title-page. The choice, as he described it, seemed to lie between lines from various old songs, and at length Amos, squinting with benevolence, said "If you must have a famous old song, why not 'I'm dreaming of a whited sepulchre'?"

This biography was of a member of the House of Lords, and another time he suggested a title for it: *Noblesse Oblique*.

In biography he always preferred the debunking method, which he held was a completely different art-form from ordinary (or as he called it "ham") biography. "The title," he declared, "should always make it clear whether you really excavated the man's motives or not," and for some time he was at work on an account of the life of the great fabulist which he meant to call *Aesop's Foibles*.

"Radio interviewers," Amos said, "have perfected an extraordinary technique of *delayed surprise*. They start with an exceedingly circumstantial leading question, and then appear to be thunderstruck by some minor detail added in the reply." Here Amos sat up, while the draught from the fireplace rattled the stout hairs of his moustache against the uncurling fronds of his cigar, and imitated a radio interview, in what he believed to be two different voices: "Is it true, Mr. Smith, that you used to have a pet duck which you spent seventeen and a half months teaching to play fugues on a mouth-organ? *Yes, that's right. It was a chromatic mouth-organ, of course. Was it really? I say, that's extraordinarily interesting!*"

"Talking of pets," Amos said after this, "I have often thought of having a pet of some kind myself. Johnson and his cat Hodge—Hogarth and his dog Trump—Intolerable and his mackerel Squish—it sounds all right, don't you think? But I have never been able to decide what kind of pet. Should I have something very large, say a St. Bernard, or one of the short and simple animals of the poor?" Here a friend of whom he expected better things made some uncomplimentary remark; to which he replied with a phrase in which, he once told us, he had

taken great pains to blend sorrow and anger in equal proportions: "*Et tu, quoque!*"

Amos was never tired, or at least seldom as tired as we were, of discussing fine points of language or expression. More than once he spoke of the care with which requests to supernatural beings bearing gifts to the cradle of a princess, as in the fairy stories, would have to be framed to-day. (Outside his apparently hard interior, Amos was as soft as a wet biscuit.) An example he was particularly fond of suggesting was that of the enthusiastic father who said to the literal-minded fairy godmothers "Now, give this little girl a big hand!"

To a man who came in saying he had just bought a saw, Amos commented "Fond of music?"

Although aware that in his younger days Amos had held a subordinate position in the office of a literary agent, we were all surprised when he once described to us the exact nature of his duties. "It was my job," he said, "to go through the typescripts of all novels by male authors, before we sent them to any publishers, and insert at about every ninth or tenth page a shred of tobacco. This was usually very helpful to the book's chances, because, as is well known, publishers are always more disposed to risk money on an author whose books they can advertise with a photograph of him smoking a pipe. . . . My job ceased after three successive novelists named Esmé, Evelyn and Leslie had turned out to be women."

Amos was in the habit of appropriating and at once reading through any book he was able to extract from under the arm of an acquaintance. After some hours' absorption in a book acquired in this manner he closed it sharply, sat up, and delivered himself of his opinion: "There is something for everybody in this book, so nobody will like it."

R. M.

The Warden

WITH hem ther cam a man of smale lengthe,
Yet thik and brood, and therwith gret of strengthe;
Certes, he nas nat lyk a pyned goste;
I gesse he was the maister of a poste,
And kepte wel for everich incidente
Ther as he hadde warde and gouvernemento.
He hadde a murie chere, and eyen brighte,
And sayde he coude see a shining lighte
Though it were dark with blindes half a score,
Or shoon but at the kinkes of a dore.
Whan that the horne waylede up and doun
Ther nas no man so quik to here his soun;
He waytede ofte on everich happe and chaunce;
Of bombes coude he al the olde daunce.
For his arraye, he was accountred wel:
His hat was round as it were any bel,
And ther-on stod y-write a twinned U;
His shoon were stoute; his habergeoun was blew;
Therto he heng his lanterne al bifore;
Nobby he highte; soth, I noot namore.

Kleptomania

"... The disease is common not only among working-class youths but among the so-called professional or black-coated workers. The manageress of a large department store said: 'I should say that at least seventy-eight per cent. of the thefts from this store are committed by well-to-do adults. Very often what they steal is of little financial or economic value: it is not so much the goods they want as the sensation of thieving.'

"War inevitably produces something of a breakdown in public morality. During the Crimean War the 'counter-shrinkage' (as the accountants put it) at Dombody and Froebel's, in the Strand, rose from fourteen to seventeen per cent. of total stock. The Boer War cost the Midland Hotel, Crowstairs, no fewer than 173 salt-cellars, 203 table-napkins, 51,221 'No Tipping' notices and one marble-topped wash-stand. The sorry standards of the last war are still fresh in the minds of most of us. War plays havoc with our consciences. At a time like this it is a grave blow to the national effort that upwards of 200,000 of our ablest workers are employed to check the rising menace of kleptomania."

I must admit that I read this extract from an article in the *Daily Dose* very sceptically. I could hardly be expected to believe that four out of every five of my friends were petty sneak-thieves. Mrs. Bowerby? Charlie Minchlip? Maud? Harry Driver? Bob Copping? No! The idea was of course monstrous.

About a week later the article was recalled to my mind by an incident which I will now relate. It occurred at the ironmonger's, where I was endeavouring to obtain a new door for my meat-safe. By my side stood a young woman. She wore a mink coat. I noticed that her small son (about three years of age) was playing with a long rope which had a metal hook fixed at one end. As the attendant spoke to me the woman bent down, ostensibly to apply spittle to an incipient ladder in her stocking, but actually, as I observed with amazement, to attach the hook to a set of harness displayed before the counter. The attendant advised me of the shortage of doors for meat-safes and I departed. A minute later the woman left the shop dragging her son by the arm. She walked quickly away and as she did so I saw the rope emerge from the shop with the harness securely attached to its end.

I followed the procession into a nearby alley. . . .

There were protestations of innocence and then tears.

"Have you a horse?" I said.

"No, no. No, I haven't."

"Then, why on earth . . ."

"Oh, don't you see," she said, "it's not the harness I want, it's . . ."

"I understand," I said. "I think I know exactly how you feel. And I

am going to say nothing about it. You have had your lesson and I am quite sure you will know what to do."

I walked home in a very thoughtful mood.

It was almost a month later that I noticed this item in the columns of the *Daily Dose*:

WANTED urgently, pram, any condition in exchange for complete set harness, as new. Box A 317.



"Yes, I quite see that if only I had wrapped the pipes up with all the old clothes and blankets I haven't got, and kept up a roaring fire with all the coal I can't get, I shouldn't now be telephoning for the plumber that can't come."



"I was saying just before you came in, Mr. Titmouse, that in the event of an invasion the defence of these islands would in the main devolve on us. Find yourself a pew and make yourself comfortable."

In Cold Storage

AS beautiful as mountains in the morning,
Stately and splendid still, and still unsold,
The houses of the rich are very handsome,
And also very, very, VERY cold!

The fresh keen wind that whistles through the doorways,
Freezes the Toulouse-Lautreus to the walls,
And lumps of snow drift with the bills from Caspary
Across the ice-green hyperborean halls.

The brandy glasses and the Rockingham
Rattle with palsy on the Empire tables,
And little moths, newborn, are frozen solid
To die, amazed, upon the minks and sables.

With diamond rings concealed in lambskin gloves,
With pearls and mufflers strangely intertwined,
In small back rooms, looking on sad grey leads,
The opulent sit cowering and resigned.

The Adam mantlepiece bends slightly over
To warm its emblems in the timid fire,
And oh, how bitter true it is, the saying,
None but the impecunious perspire!

Onto the landings, where their breath in clouds
Floats round the fluted banisters, the dead
Rich, who have lost what money cannot buy,
Put on their skis and clamber up to bed. V. G.

Newspapers

ONE of the most significant forms of modern life is, no doubt, the newspaper. Historians tell us that as far as they can make out newspapers were being published at least two hundred years ago, but this does not make the newspapers of to-day any less modern; because it is obvious, looking at it from here, that what we call newspapers now are what was meant all along. I mean, think how newspapers began by costing, say, half a crown and worked gradually down to a shilling, then to fivepence and so on—a sure sign that newspaper proprietors were aiming, even then, at the newspaper of to-day.

The newspaper of to-day of course costs a penny, unless it costs twopence. There are two schools of opinion about twopenny newspapers, one holding that the difference in price is emotional, or done for effect, and the other that it is perfectly reasonable and works on the basis that a twopenny newspaper, by using more difficult words and being printed closer, takes twice as long to read as a penny one. Psychologists weigh in here, saying that it is confused thinking to imagine that there can be any set time for reading any newspaper, whatever its price. The reading time of a newspaper, they tell us, depends entirely on things like who is reading it, how late it is, if it is still raining, and so on. I shall have more to say about all this later.

The average daily newspaper is made in two sizes, one bigger than the other and the other smaller. All newspapers, statisticians estimate, might have been the same size as far as they can see, but Providence, knowing that a big newspaper is better for drawing fires up with and a small newspaper for reading in a crowded train, has ordered otherwise. Statisticians do not know the exact size of either size of newspaper, but they say they don't see that it matters, as anyone wanting to know the exact size of a newspaper has only to look at one to find out. It is safe to say, anyway, that a big newspaper is as wide across, when opened out, as people in a crowded train can stretch their arms if they could. I do not need to say here that a newspaper does not at present have as many pages as it used to, but in case my readers have begun to forget just how many separate sheets used to go to make up one newspaper I will remind them that there were not quite enough to share out among the average family because the average family all wanted to read the same page, and just too many to put together again afterwards, for the same reason. As we all know, a newspaper tends nowadays to have only one sheet, the outside one, and what psychologists are waiting to find out is whether, when newspapers are their normal size again, those newspaper readers who used to dislike handing round bits of their newspaper will remember to revert to this dislike or will get caught up in the general rush of bonhomie.

Now for how to read a newspaper. A newspaper is printed in big print, or headlines, ordinary print, or just print, smaller print, smaller print still, and so on, down to the bottom of the page. The biggest print, on the whole, is what the newspaper most wants its readers to read, and the smallest is what it least wants them to read; or so the public supposes, but the question has never been brought out into the daylight. A newspaper is printed in what are called columns, and the public knows what is expected of it here, because there is a thin line between each column to keep the public dead on the column right the way down the page. Sometimes the public has to steer to the left or right to take in a picture, and often, indeed, the public



"And there was a very good Government film about not putting empty milk bottles on walls."

can tell which picture belongs to which bit of print simply by following the line round the picture and coming out at the gap. The public has also learnt that when it gets to the end of a column and is told to turn to the back page it finds itself irresistibly impelled to do so—even if it read the back page part before the front page—if only to see that the printers have managed to join the meaning together. The public would like to think of newspaper printers as human like itself but does not often have the chance, which is why the public is always so pleased to find a misprint. The public is also pleased, if dimly and subconsciously, at finding the "Stop Press" space partly or completely blank, and psychologists tell us this reaction is as vestigial as anything even they have come across, being nothing more than a hangover from the days when the public was young enough to scribble its name all over other people's books at Christmas.

To go back to what I was saying earlier on, a newspaper can be read in so many different ways that it is impossible to say how long it takes to read an average newspaper. Statisticians, however, have worked out that the average reader reads the average newspaper in a series of short but gradually lengthening spells, and that you can tell the age of a newspaper by the length of time anyone takes to read it. For example, anyone glancing at a newspaper for five seconds is reading it for the first time, but anyone spending an hour over it has had it in the house for two days and knows it backwards; and statisticians add, talking of backwards reminds them of the statistically interesting fact that in the aggregate more newspapers are read more often upside-down than the right way up, because any newspaper acquiring a permanent reading value is lining a kitchen drawer by then and is caught glimpses of

whenever the drawer is opened. There are of course people who can read a newspaper straight through from start to finish, as slowly and methodically as if they were reading something real like a book, but psychologists tell us that these are what are psychologically known as other people, because they only do it when what psychologists call we ourselves are within reading distance of their paper; which is also why these other people are so careful about folding the newspaper into four to start with and keeping it so folded, whatever bit they are reading. It is all, psychologists say, in keeping with it all.

A newspaper is either bought or delivered. When we say that a newspaper is delivered we mean that it is pushed six-sevenths of the way through a letter-box and left there, and observant people noticed long ago that such a newspaper always has on its top right-hand corner something in pencil which must be the surname of the person it is delivered to but looks like nothing but something in pencil, and always in the same writing. People like to see what they fancy to be their surname in pencil on a newspaper, because it gives them a feeling of being connected with the news in the newspaper, however remotely. As for those people who actually see their own surname *printed* in a newspaper, although at the time it is being used on someone else, I can only describe their reactions as a psychologists' field-day; combining human nature's chronic inability to take a coincidence at its face value—always a red rag to psychologists—with human nature's equally chronic inability to take its own surname at all, when confronted with it unexpectedly, until it has mentally walked round it, admiring it letter by letter, and finally assessing it as psychologists could have done for them all along—as *their* surname, although at the time it is being used on someone else.

Trenchant-Leading-Article Corner

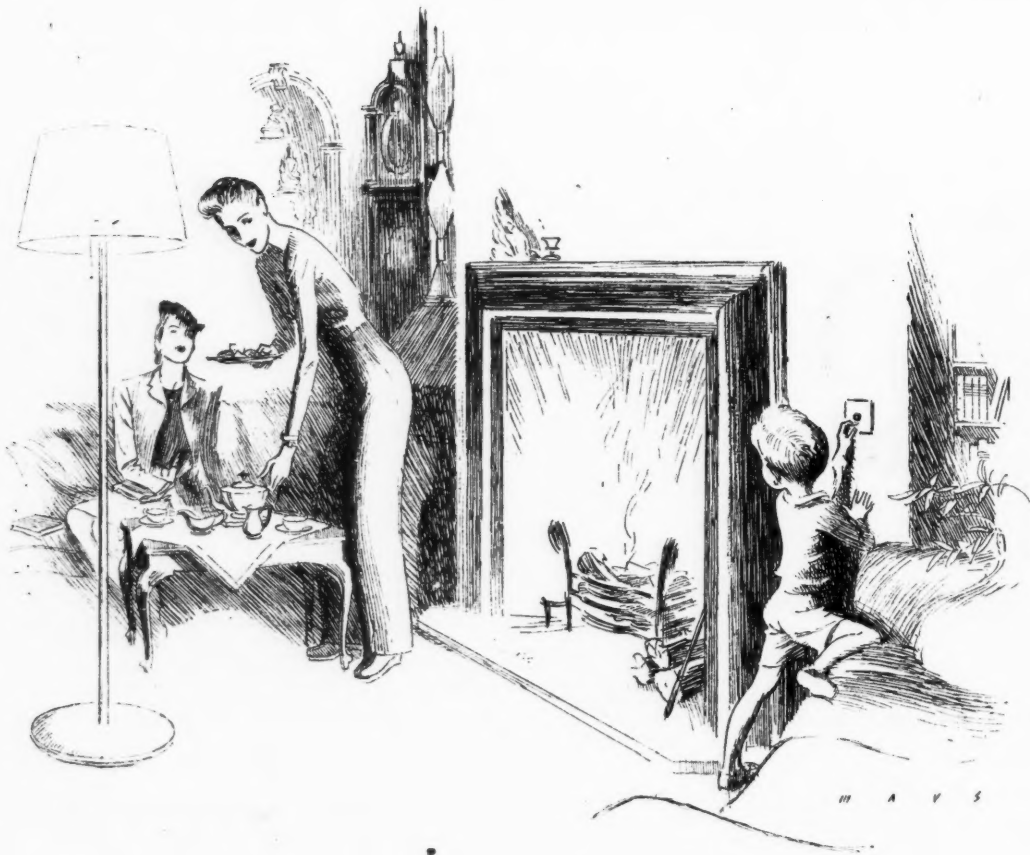
"How soon will he be able to return to London? No official indication is given, or can be expected, on this point. We shall not know that he is back, to hearten us with his presence, until his arrival in this country is disclosed."—*Yorkshire paper*.

"Her beautiful deep eyes were glowing with the thought. Both of them working, both of them looking forward. But Julian's face held no answering enthusiasm."—*From a novelette*.

Well, what *did* he want the girl to do—squint?



"Remember when you used to say 'Say W'hen,' John?"



"But what are bells for, Mummy?"

Moonshine

T WAS moonrise at starting from bonny Dundee,
When we rode eight abreast over Cannobie Lea
Past Looz and past Lexington, Aerschot and Ayr;
And where we were bound for we didn't much care
On that beautiful midnight, the last of the year.
"They'll have fleet steeds that follow!" cried Tam to
Revere.

As we swam the Eske River we saw a strange gleam,
(Except poor Mazeppa with head in the stream)
"There are two beacons blazing in Alloway Kirk
In the old belfry tower," I shouted to Dirk;
We all lost our jackboots ere reaching the shore.
"Has no one a cushion?" wailed Ellen, "I'm sore."

"We'll manage it yet! We've a chance in a million!"
Cried Paul. "—and I'm wet," moaned the voice from
the pillion.

"An' I'm kind of dry," shouted Shanter to Joris,

"We ought to have waited for that doch-an-doris."
"Hark! The howl of the wolf-pack, three thousand times
three;
Keep galloping," gurgled Mazeppa to me.

Over Ravelston cliffs and through Boom, dub and mire,
We rode like old soldiers who never expire,
Till the dome-spire at Concord shone bright like a star,
"Come fill up my goblet," cried young Lochinvar,
And then there swelled up on us out of the dark,
Like the Solway, the breath of the foul *Cutty Sark*.

She clutched and she clawed at Meg, Roland and Roos,
Till buffcoats and bonnets and broadswords came
loose;

She tripped up the roan and the cream of the Tartars,
And strangled Mazeppa with one of her garters;
But how I escaped from that terrible rout
And got safely to bed I have never found out. J. B. N.



A SHADOW OF DOUBT

"I sometimes wonder whether our civilian morale is quite as good as it might be."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, January 18th.—House of Commons: Home is the Wanderer.

Wednesday, January 19th.—House of Commons: The House is Educated.

Thursday, January 20th.—House of Commons: The Process is Continued.

Tuesday, January 18th.—Sir ALBERT LAMBERT WARD, Conservative M.P. for Hull, North-West division, sat in his place in the House of Commons trying (with reasonable success) to look as if Question-time was not boring him. Sir WILLIAM JOWITT, the Minister Without Portfolio, was "up" making a statement on something or other, and mentioned that a financial statement would be included in a White Paper.

Suddenly Sir ALBERT leaped to his feet, whirled his Order Paper around his head, and said: "Yer—er—er—er!" in a sort of crescendo of delighted enthusiasm.

Clearly wondering how so harmless an announcement (Sir WILLIAM is, seemingly, fated to make that brand of statement) could raise so great a burst of enthusiasm, the Minister looked around to see who was organizing this "rag." But by then the whole House was on its feet, waving its papers, cheering.

Ministers were waving with the rest, and so were the members of the Opposition. Sir WILLIAM passed a hand across his eyes, looked dazed.

Then he swung round and looked in the direction of the Speaker's Chair. And there was the explanation.

Standing smiling and bowing was the Prime Minister, looking what is technically known as bronzed and fit, beaming around and grinning like a delighted schoolboy. Even Sir WILLIAM (who has not perhaps much about which to smile these days—it's no fun being Deputy Minister of Reconstruction in a reconstruction-hungry House of Commons) grinned broadly and bowed to the P.M.

Then Mr. CHURCHILL, thrusting his hands into his jacket pockets, stepped forward to his customary seat opposite the dispatch-box, waved his hand in cheery (if unconventional) greeting to the House and to his wife and daughters in the Gallery, and sat down.

Leaning on the knee of Mr. ATTLEE, the Prime Minister spoke to Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, whirled round to talk to Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, turned his head to exchange a few sentences with his Parliamentary Private Secretary, Brigadier HARVIE WATT, behind him, glanced at the

replies to a dozen questions he had to answer, and finally sat still, looking at the Members opposite.

There was another cheer as Mr. CHURCHILL stood up to answer his first question of 1944. His voice, which had sounded a little strained of late, had regained all its old vigour, and his sense of humour had obviously suffered no diminution. Perhaps it was a healthy respect for this sense of humour that made Captain LEONARD PLUGGE seem so ill-at-ease as he waited—on the extreme edge of the seat—to ask this question:

"To ask the Prime Minister what steps he is taking to relieve himself of



FLYING MERCURY

"An air letter takes on the average seven days to reach the forward field post office of the Fifth and Eighth Armies."—Lord Croft, Under-Secretary, War Office.

some of his official burdens with a view to conserving his health?"

Mr. CHURCHILL sprang alertly to the table. Captain PLUGGE mopped his brow. The rest of the House waited for the reply with much the expressions slightly oversat spectators at a contest between lions and early Christians must have worn.

"While," said Mr. CHURCHILL, "I am obliged to my honourable and gallant friend for his solicitude, I have no changes to propose at present in my routine."

Captain PLUGGE, who is nothing if not opportunist (his question had received not a little advance publicity), leaped up with the further question: "Is the Prime Minister aware that his

reply will be received with great satisfaction?"—and gave quite a creditable "impression" of a man who had wanted that answer all the time.

Later Sir RICHARD ACLAND, Leader of the Common Wealth Party (both of it) assisted by Mr. LOVERSEED, brought in the latest addition to his strength, Mr. LAWSON, victor (by 200 votes) of the Skipton by-election. And a very creditable performance they made of the formal introduction, keeping perfect Guards' step, bowing with the precision of courtiers, clicking their heels so loudly that the Home Guard M.P.s nodded approvingly.

The business of the day was a Bill to compel all employers of considerable staffs to give work to a quota of disabled men or women. There was of course no opposition to the measure, but many M.P.s wanted to make it still more favourable especially to Service men and women.

Giant Mr. MALCOLM MCCORQUODALE and tiny Mr. GEORGE TOMLINSON, Under-Secretaries at the Labour Ministry, exercised their considerable powers of persuasion to get an amendment withdrawn. This demanded first place in the training centres for disabled ex-Service men, and Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, the Minister of Labour, reinforced his lieutenants' plea with a promise that he would, later, try to find some form of words that said the same thing. The movers of the amendment agreed to drop it, for the present.

Which was just as well, because the House was in a mood that might have meant the defeat of the Government.

Wednesday, January 19th.—It was announced that Britain's Bomber Command had, in 1943, safely delivered to Germany 136,000 tons of bombs, what time the *Luftwaffe* had brought 2,400 tons to us. In the first eighteen days of 1944 the respective tonnages were 6,000 and 15!

This particular balance of trade seemed to please the House more than somewhat. Mr. BOOTHBY was less pleased about the prospects of the whisky trade in the years to come, for, said he, if some is not made soon there will be none of the mature stuff to export, and how will our export trade fare then, poor thing? Colonel LLEWELIN, the Food Minister, retorted that there were competing claims for the ingredients, adding that no cereals had been allocated to the production of whisky since 1941.

Members sighed—except of course Lady ASTOR, who seemed to be on the verge of a rousing cheer.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN mentioned that we were speaking sternly to the Spanish



"Oyez! Oyez! As from to-day all burnings at the stake are forbidden until a special permit has been obtained from the Fuel Controller."

Government on the subject of "un-neutral" assistance to our enemies. Such assistance, he said, with a certain air of firmness, could not be of any great help to Anglo-Spanish relations in the years after the war. And this aspect, among others, the British Ambassador in Madrid and the Spanish Ambassador in London were being asked to observe.

For all his smooth manners and his enviably well-groomed appearance, Mr. EDEN can be (in the phrase of a Ministerial colleague), "incredibly tough," and the House clearly liked his attitude.

Sir ARCHIBALD SOUTHBY, by the way, secured from the Air Minister the important ruling that any Member of the Services was at liberty to "write to his (or her) M.P. about it," without any offence to K.R.s, or their equivalent. But, it seems, not to any other M.P. All very difficult.

Business of the day was the Government's Education Bill, and there was a rustle of interest as a striking figure was ushered into the Distinguished

Strangers' Gallery: the Archbishop of WESTMINSTER, enthroned only the day before.

His presence was a symbol of the criticism to be levelled at the Bill by the Roman Catholic Church, over the provision to be made for church schools, and Mr. R. A. BUTLER, the Minister of Education, seemed, for the greater part of his speech, to be addressing the Archbishop rather than the House.

It was an eloquent, admirably-delivered speech, with all the idealism which is never far beneath the surface in Mr. BUTLER's public utterances. His aim is education for all according to age, ability and aptitude—"an Old Etonian tie in every satchel," as one Member put it. Carefully and delicately he glided over the thin ice of the church schools controversy, went on to promise that there should be a big teacher-training plan immediately after the war.

Rather to the Minister's surprise the Roman Catholic M.P.s let him down lightly, promising him the

Second Reading of the Bill, but—adding that they expected "kindly give and take" when the Committee stage is reached. Mr. BUTLER looked a little nervous.

Life was real, life was earnest for their Lordships, for breezy Lord BEAVERBROOK, Lord Privy Seal, was back on duty, armed with a powerful piece on the subject of civil aviation. In his Niagara-ish style (which plainly fascinates their Lordships) Lord B. outlined his ideas of post-war aviation, mentioned proudly—as the first Minister of Aircraft Production should—that the British aircraft industry, which had done so much for Britain in the hour of her greatest peril, would once more give us aircraft that would not disappoint the highest hopes of those who believed in a dazzling future for civil flying.

Dazzled, their Lordships went home.

Thursday, January 20th.—The process of educating the House of Commons according to age, aptitude and ability was continued, and the Education Bill got its Second Reading.



"Now I want you to imagine that the Alert has sounded . . ."

Sitting Room Only

"WELL, here we go again. What is it about pub sitting-rooms that makes them so friendly?"

"The horrors have had time to mellow. Hotels make the mistake of trying to keep up-to-date and so the bits and pieces are always still fighting it out."

"Pub sitting-rooms are more complicated, aren't they?"

"Much. If you look at the bookshelf under those stuffed bream to the right of the 'Present from Liverpool' you'd quite easily find *Debrett* for 1907, *Robinson Crusoe*, and possibly a first edition of *Mona's Collie*, the latter a Sunday School prize."

"There's no need for two of us to look. I'm going to get fond of the bream in five days, though. I always

grow devoted to stuffed fish if I have long enough to bridge that first difficult little social gulf." (Pause)

"It's hell about this Major Upwhistle, isn't it?"

"And about Mrs. Upwhistle."

"What on earth brings them here to-day?"

"I suppose they get leave in the Army, too. Did you ask how long they're staying?"

"A week. It means a vulgar rush after every meal for the arm-chairs. If we get there first we'll feel cads and if they do we'll be furious, so it's gloom whichever way you look."

"I know he's going to be a great gaunt man with a laugh that'll blow us into the taproom."

"And we shall be being soft over India."

"Mrs. Upwhistle will be small but wide and have a wart on her nose that one'll have to try not to look at at meals."

"I hadn't thought of meals. Not round this table?"

"Well, we've survived them before. Don't forget we lived through the Bunglejohn crisis at the 'Swan' just before the war."

"I never shall. It was the way her ears went round and round with each bite that worked me up so."

"You remember the night his spectacles fell in the soup and we were the only ones who laughed?"

"Still, it was broth, and very hard to fish. He kept getting weeded up."

"Don't let's get depressed about the Upwhistles. She may not want us to play bridge."

"No, and maybe he won't be a twitch-and-sniff king. After all, we lived through a week in that pub in Bavaria with the professor who kept probing my soul all through the Wiener Schnitzel."

"So we did. And that was a high-level crisis compared with the Bundle-john affair."

"But all the same——"

"Yes?"

"—these Upwhistles are hell. Why can't they leave us alone?"

(Enter rural child carrying rural table-cloth)

"Mother ses if you wants a book they's under the fish."

"Thanks very much."

"Mrs. Upwhistle's just phoned. He's took with scarlet fever."

(Exit rural child)

"I say, I feel bad about that. Poor man!"

"Yes, poor old Upwhistle! Cramp his leave terribly."

"Still, it's not serious any longer. Do you know, I expect he was charming."

"And I expect she was a winner, too. With any luck we might meet them somewhere one day." (Pause)

"Does this really mean we've got it to ourselves?"

"It can't be true."

"We can put our feet on the mantel-piece for five days."

"And talk with our mouths full."

"But no heart-to-hearts about the scarcity of halibut?"

"Not a single girl-to-girl, not even about a marvellous way of padding out a cake with turnips."

"And no men-to-men, nothing about a right-and-left before the Colonel could get his gun to his shoulder?"

"Absolutely none. No early gallops. No well-scrubbed fun of any kind."

"Not even the obliquest reference to that most revolting of all parlour sports, that indecent impediment to reading, sleep and idle chatter, that social anæsthetic, that——"

"I know. Bridge. I shan't mention it."

"I'm glad it won't be necessary to face the Upwhistles across a rice-pudding. It might have been very gruelling work."

"I believe he would have had rather a difficult technique with toast, poor chap. I do hope he hasn't got it badly."

"He must be pretty strong or they wouldn't have made him a major."

"I think we ought to send him something."

"A telegram might seem a bit too quick off the mark, I suppose?"

"I meant something like a bottle of port or a good book."

"Let's send him *Debrett* for 1907. I imagine it's unforgettable."

(Enter without warning a very muscular lady)

"Do you mind if I thaw myself? I'm nothing but a block of ice."

"Oh, of course, do."

"My husband's just putting our steeds to bed."

"Horses?"

"No, no! Just one of my little jokes. Our three-speed steeds!"

"But surely he shouldn't be out with scarlet fever?"

"Scarlet fever? He's biked eighty miles to-day. Tired, of course. But aren't we all?"

"You're not Mrs. Upwhistle, then?"

"Good heavens, no. Sparkbrook is the name. I can see we shall have to work on this fire and get up a nice cosy fag. Are the arm-chairs comfy?"

"Very."

"Good. I say, what jolly fish! And lots of books. There's nothing I like better on a hol than a book with plenty of story to it. None of your psychological fiddle-faddles for me."

"Are you just staying the night?"

"No, rather not. Mine host says he can put us up for five days. Jolly lucky seeing we just barged in."

"Frightfully."

"Look here, I'll tell you what. My old man and I'll have a tub and get down in time to knock one or two back matey-like before dinner, and then afterwards we can make up——"

"—a nice four at BRIDGE!" ERIC.

Milly the Railway Girl

AUCHTERBROSE

SCOTLAND

Friday

To Mr Spout M P

DEAR SIR,—This is Mrs Dusty Mrs Pilkie and Mrs McSumph writing and you was asking about Milly McTain that you spoke for to get a job to be a guard on the railway. Well unfortunate she has turned out flighty. And the Railway Company is very much upset with her.

There is the shouting the names at the stations. Of course before the war with the porters it was the broad Scotch strangers could not make out. But Milly does not speak even English she is that affected. She kind of croons the names in American. Old Davie Stodge says it is fair frightening to hear her at Cumberlachieshaws in the black-out.

But it is flirting is Millys' worst

trouble. One day the train arrived at Dumphlin. The door of the guards van is standing wide open and there is no guard inside of it. The cries gets up the guard has fell oot the train. And then all of a sudden the bold Milly pops out of a carriage as jack easy as you like. It appears she had went into the carriage to sit beside one of her boys instead of going into her own van. And she told us herself it was only when she got her eye on her uniform cap in the mirror in the carriage that she minded she was a guard now.

After that she got into trouble about Jock Stumps. You see they have put Milly on the 8.30 that starts here and takes the business gentlemen to Drumly in the mornings. Well Jock Stumps goes with that train to his work and Milly started an affair with him. And one morning Jocks landlady got word down to Milly that Jock had slept in. And without a word of a lie Mr Spout M P she kept the train waiting for twenty minutes till Jock turned up at last. And then jack easy walking down the train with him till she got him a nice seat with his arm round her waist. And mind you the carriages full of the business gentlemen. And the fume they was in is not for words. And the bold Milly had not got to her limits yet. Oh no.

Because the latest about her is that she has been found out taking every chance she can get to start her train five minutes too early. And the business gentlemen comes rushing down to the station and finds their train away before its time. Such rows. Well it appears Milly is quite off now with Jock Stumps and she has took a pash for the engine driver of the early down train. And her ploy is to meet his train at Throckles station so he can stop his engine beside her van. Imagine a lassie taking a whole passenger train with her to do her courting. It is not common sense. And the Railway Company is at its wits end them being that short of labour. Most unfortunate it all is. But we will let you know what develops with kind regards.

Yours most respectful,

MARTHA DUSTY (Mrs)

MARY PILKIE (Mrs)

HELEN MCSUMPH (Mrs)

P.S.—Word has just got about that the Railway Company is taking Millys engine driver off the early down and putting his engine to pulling Millys train. But some folks is saying whats to do if Milly gets fed up with him. More trouble maybe. For if there is one thing Milly is not it is constant with her boys. D.

At the Play

"DON ABEL WROTE A TRAGEDY" (ARTS)

ALTHOUGH the tragedy was as bad as it was long, *Don Abel* treasured every word in the five acts. He and his *Wounded Dove* became as familiar in the green-rooms as he had been in the Government office where—a mild, punctilious Mr. Pooter turned Civil Servant—he flourished among the red tapeworms of Madrid. But there was a sad difference. In his office *Don Abel* (man of letters in flowing copper-plate) had been both popular and an institution. At the theatre he was a bore and an interloper, a man of one idea and one play.

When he banged out of the clerks' room, crying with Coriolanus "There is a world elsewhere," he had expected to have Madrid at his feet in a week or two. Alas for *Abel*! All was vanity and vexation of spirit. Just three years later his family was penniless, and *The Wounded Dove* had been produced—at, one gathers, a local equivalent of the Tank Theatre, Islington—and damned so thoroughly that *Abel's* castle in Spain, complete to its cloud-capped towers, crumbled about him. Now that the play had become a personal tragedy he rejected any desperate proposal to add a song or get the tailor down the road to insert a few funny lines. He preferred to return to red tape and sealing-wax and the friendly tyranny of the precise Civil Servant, *Mauricio*, still as determined to change the constitution as *Abel* had been to storm the stage. But the prodigal was barely at his desk before *Urrutia*, once the ugly duckling of the clerks, later a spare-time deviser of deplorable but lucrative farces, had prevailed on him to collaborate. Gone the high intentions, the rash-embraced despair. Exit Melpomene; enter Thalia. Life seemed now to be wildly comic. On a picture of the restored *Abel*, scribbling furiously at the farce of the Captain's Parrots, with the Government papers again tossed aside, the authors drop the curtain. Their piece is ready to restart. *Don Abel* writes a comedy. Poor *Abel*! Poor Madrid!

This is another of those tenuously pleasant plays of character (from a serener Spain dated vaguely "before the Civil War") in which the parts are more important than the whole. Like that other Spaniard, Armado, the authors—SERAFÍN and JOAQUÍN ALVAREZ

QUINTERO—have drawn out the thread of their verbosity finer than the staple of their argument. It is lucky for the British reputation of the prolific brothers that their work is adapted over here by Mr. and Mrs. GRANVILLE-BARKER. These have done for *Don Abel* all that wit and resource can do, but the play never approaches the quality of *A Hundred Years Old* and needs a crisper production (with more inspiration in the minor performances) than it gets at the Arts.

Still, some of the characters are rewarding. The QUINTEROS keep one interested in the quirks and oddities of *Don Abel's* acquaintances—more, surprisingly, than in the wan little man himself, well though he is played by Mr. JOHN RUDDOCK, neat and sympathetic in comedy and pathos. There are the genteel maidservant whose tale, as searingly romantic as anything in the novels of Mrs. Amanda Ros, inspired *The Wounded Dove*; the clutch of Government clerks—raffish, tired, boorish, or just clumsy—and, best of all, the theatre's affable phantom, the Anonymous Gentleman who affects to recognize everyone and whom nobody knows from Adam. Mr. TONY QUINN, endowing the Spanish blade with a genial impudence heightened by an Irish accent, almost persuades one to believe in his eternal Julia and to accept those baffling reminiscences. ("How it rained!" he booms. After him the deluge: Mr. QUINN makes us see it all.)

Little else can compare with this brief sketch, though it is good to find dramatists who treat an eminent actress as a tolerant human being instead of a blend of Millamant and Medea. Miss GRACE LANE lends her own charming dignity to this *Dona Antonia*. Foso, a parlour oracle plummily impersonated by Mr. DAVID BIRD, is another amusing type, a hack dramatist out of action yet richly relishing his failures long ago and savouring every remembered hiss. One is grateful also for Mr. ELWYN BROOK-JONES's gaucherie as the rabbit of the Circumlocution Office and the potential life-and-soul of the Madrid stage; and of course for Mr. RUDDOCK's *Don Abel*, that other Knight of the Mournful Countenance, "from one sorrow to another thrown," but clinging valiantly to his portfolio with its

load of mischief. It is a pity that *Don Abel* never grows into a really substantial figure. As it is, one wants to know much more about the Anonymous Gentleman and his tantalizing Julia. Who in the world is Julia? What is she that not a soul recalls her?
J. C. T.

Fitting

"I'M sending you some battle-dresses," said Major Fibbing over the telephone, "and I don't want to hear any nonsense about them being second-hand and threadbare. Tell your men they are not chorus girls and there is a war on, and that all the battle-dress makers are now either in the Army or on munitions; and then your men won't cavil."

The battle-dresses arrived, and my white sergeant looked at them and said how nice it was of the Major to have realized that we were short of cleaning-rags for the men's rifles.

"They are not cleaning-rags," I said, "they are other people's last year's battle-dresses cleaned and disinfested and certified by Ordnance as fit to be worn again."

"They are Eighth Army battle-dresses," said Lieutenant Sympton; "and I never realized what the Eighth Army went through."

We lined our Kugombas up in their neat khaki shorts and shirts, and presented them each with a battle-dress.

"It will soon be cold," said Lieutenant Sympton, who runs what may be called the Tact Department in our Company, "and the C.O. is anxious that you should keep warm, so he has sent you these excellent battle-dresses."

The first man picked up his battle-dress and looked at it in a sort of unhappy way, and then burst into a stream of Lagomba. East African soldiers are all supposed to speak Swahili, but in moments of emotion they fall back on their tribal languages. East African tribal languages are beautifully expressive, and Sympton knew what the man meant although he did not understand enough of it to put him on a charge.

"Be careful, Yowana Mukasa," he said, "or you will find yourself in trouble."

After that there was no fuss, except occasional mutterings, but when it was all over one man came back. He was wearing his battle-dress, but the trousers came only just below his

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"It's a Manx, dear—they haven't any tails."
 "Will they in peace-time, Mummie?"

knees, and the blouse was also ridiculously small. If the man had been a private we might have passed it off with a light laugh, but he was a sergeant. And an East African sergeant is quite an important man.

"Some mistake must have been made about the sizes," said Sympton.

So he rang up Company H.Q. and said that Sergeant Masindi had got a very small battle-dress, and could it be changed? Luckily Major Fibbing was out, and Captain Hollyhock, who is a sweet-natured man, said that obviously if a battle-dress were the wrong size the R.A.O.C. would not have the slightest hesitation in changing it.

So presently another battle-dress arrived for Sergeant Masindi. It was almost new. At least, it was almost new when we opened the package, but oddly enough when Sergeant Masindi

came back from his tent with it on it looked very old, and was also much too small.

So we sent for another. The R.A.O.C. said that they would always change "misfits," but they were not allowed to change a battle-dress just because it was threadbare. If they had passed a battle-dress as fit for wear, fit for wear it was—unless of course it was a misfit.

Next time Sergeant Masindi's battle-dress was too large, and again it looked quite new in the box and very old when he put it on.

"Personally," said Sympton, "I think he is sort of elastic. One day he is tall and the next day he is short. But we must go on persevering until he is fitted."

He was fitted at last, after fifteen attempts. . . . There are fifteen men in a section of East African Pioneers,

and all Sergeant Masindi's section wore new battle-dresses.

So much disaffection was caused among the other men that we quite disliked Sergeant Masindi, until the Colonel came along and said that if one section could be dressed like that, they all could. So, in due course, they were.

A Thought

(For Gardeners)

THE Russians, so we lately learned,
 Are fighting on the Sluz—
 A piece of news which cannot fail
 An answering chord to tuez,
 Since how you spell it, after all,
 Can't really matter muoz,
 And we who dig for victory
 Are toiling—in the sluz. C. F. S.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

On Old Age

ALTHOUGH he is now in his seventy-second year, and in spite of his sombre theme, Mr. JOHN COWPER POWYS is as ebulliently and tumultuously discursive as ever in *The Art of Growing Old* (CAPE, 10/6). Among the writers who have formed his style and thought are Montaigne, Emerson, Urquhart, Lamb, Walt Whitman, Wordsworth, Henry James, Shakespeare, Cicero and Sir Thomas Browne, and though the resulting amalgam may not be to everyone's taste it will please those readers who have become of late equally weary of descriptions of the present and forecasts of the future. The aim of "this modern *De Senectute*," as Mr. Powys calls his book, is to suggest the consolations inherent in "that peculiar static state of which we have to make the best when our years close in." Among these consolations he places nature first, and by nature he means not only seas and mountains and wide landscapes but those chance sights which may be enjoyed in a town as well as in the country—"A flock of birds will cross our patch of sky; a tuft of grass, a clump of moss, will break the monotony of our brick pavement; some tiny flowering weed will catch our eye upon a familiar dump-heap." These effects, he says, which charmed us in childhood but were ignored in the stir and activity of youth and middle age, renew their charm for some at least among the old—"Shuffling slowly home, our old man and old woman will, if they are true 'elementalists,' instinctively or deliberately force their sluggish souls to fuse themselves with everything upon which their eyes fall. They won't draw back in artistic pain at the sight of a flimsily-erected row of little new houses. They won't embrace a beautiful ploughed field while they dodge a smoking dung-hill, or an old deciduous wood while they turn from a cabbage-patch." Whether this "primal innocence . . . of sensation," as he calls it elsewhere, can be deliberately recaptured by the aged may be doubted, but that it has survived, not much impaired, in Mr. Powys himself is evident in flashes throughout this book, which makes up by its freshness of spirit for what it lacks in order and coherence. With this freshness goes a simple common sense which, though often obscured, breaks out from time to time, as in his advice to the old to vary the rereading of books they know too well with the study of a foreign language, whose unfamiliar words will stir the imagination again.

H. K.

Fairy-Tales of Fact

It has become one of the supreme occupations of the good life to rescue the arts from the sciences; for, like the Polish-Russian frontier, their border-line is a debatable ground of principle. What Gilbert White, for instance, used to call "Natural History" is an example of this infiltrated territory; and a book like Mr. E. W. HENDY'S *Somerset Birds and Some Other Folk* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 12/6) is a humane reversion to Gilbert White. Here you have, exquisitely chronicled, the wild and tame life visible from a house and bird-sanctuary near Porlock; and the chronicle does not confine itself to wild animals and domesticated men, because animals have their domesticities and men their share of wildness. Thus the author can pass from the home life of the chaffinch to that of an old wood-cutter with equal felicity. His animal stories, as Mr. MASSINGHAM says in his preface, are the most

magical: like the story of the viper who, when threatened, has been seen by several onlookers to swallow her young. The record, however, is never lacking in realism: witness the rustic widower who, having been told that the Almighty had need of the dear departed, replied, "Well, 'E be welcome to 'er. She were a teasy toad."

H. P. E.

Romantic France

If the lessons implicit in French history of the sixteenth century had been adequately appreciated the tragedy of the policy of appeasement in our own day might have been avoided. In *The Age of Catherine de Medici* (CAPE, 6/-) Professor J. E. NEALE shows the Queen Mother, adroit and supple schemer not burdened with fixed convictions, thinking to adjust at a round-table conference the doctrinal differences that divided Huguenots from Papists. That barrier was charged with passionate emotion as liable to furious discharge as the political tension between Nazism and Democracy. There could be no peace by agreement where discussion merely revealed the lack of any basis for compromise, and the religious wars of France followed as surely as the break between Hitlerism and civilized Europe. In this brilliant short study the writer supplies something more than a background sketch for the stirring events of the period, for he is able to recall at will the authentic thrill of Stanley Weyman, livening his historical outline with brisk Henry of Navarre, the deadly Guises, loyal Admiral Coligny and all their train of ruffling cavaliers, black priests and dainty ladies. At the back of the writer's mind there is always the remembrance that his own heroine, Queen Elizabeth, in this country faced difficulties almost as acute as Catherine's and yet kept her people free from civil war.

C. C. P.

Mr. Turner's Parables

In *Fables, Parables, and Plots* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 7/6) Mr. W. J. TURNER has a romp with his favourite ideas and airs some graceful fantasies. He tells us that you may read his little book "for pleasure, or seriously, for reflection." The first way is probably best. Go all out for pleasure and you are certain to enjoy the charming Christmas fantasy, "The Man Who Saved Pumpelsdrop," and "The Ship," a sketch of the British Constitution which Mr. TURNER likes to fancy as an enormous, though old and creaking, luxury-liner, with instruments which have long since ceased to work, and passengers who have never seen the sea but don't worry till their morning tea stops coming and there is no water in the lavatories; or there is "The Tree of Life," an elegant fairy-tale about a mysterious head gardener who gives orders but remains invisible in the manner of Kafka. (What would it be like to live in a hotel staffed with Kafka servants?) These pieces are certainly worth reading for pleasure, but "seriously, for reflection" is another cup of tea. Mr. TURNER includes a good many little discussions and dialogues, the arguments of which trail off disconcertingly—probably Dean Inge is the only man alive who can manage this business with complete success. And every now and then you are embarrassed by a sentence such as this: "If all the depositors (of a bank) suddenly in a panic insisted on getting real goods (such as gold, for example) for their currency" . . . gold, apparently, being regarded as real goods and not as a symbol of credit.

P. M. F.

O solitudo, sola beatitudo!

One does not feel that his co-religionists would like the point stressed, but it is a fact that the greatest of mediæval

theologians taught that in itself, and taken on for the right reasons, the life of the contemplative solitary is the most perfect life of all. Something of the spirit of the hermits who built bridges and manned lighthouses has descended to the author of *Rungli-Rungliot* (DAVIES, 8/6), with the difference that Mrs. RUMER GODDEN is a pantheist—so that a pink begonia, a magnolia-coloured Pekingese or a child inditing its first poem are all much of a muchness to her. At once contemplative and active, she took to a few months' sojourn in the remotest outpost of a remote Himalayan tea-plantation like a duck to water. The household embraced her own two little girls, the small boy of a friend, a young Italian governess and eleven native retainers; and she enjoyed—and makes more than enjoyable—that "gravity, complete simplicity and absence of hurry" which made up "the dailiness of Chinglan." "I should like," she says, "to force everyone from their very beginnings to spend some time alone." It is perhaps the greatest weakness of a stimulating book that the use of the word "force" is characteristic. H. P. E.

Sea Time

Mr. GEOFFREY WILLANS' book, *One Eye on the Clock* (MACMILLAN, 8/6), an account of service as an R.N.V.R. officer, is described on the cover as "the best and liveliest report we have yet had of life on the great waters in time of war." Even without having read all the rest one is inclined to agree, just as one cannot help believing that the author's second-hand account of the Dunkirk evacuation, told to him by one who had spent a week there, must also be the best because it is so human—so pathetic and humorous, glorious and shameful, since "flight breeds fear and panic in the same measure as courage and endurance." The first-hand accounts of life in the corvette under an N.O. who knew how to blend autocracy with democracy in right measure for a happy little ship is equally stimulating. The corvette was lively enough to try stomachs, and might have been cramped enough to try temper, but instead she bred fellowship without yo-ho-ishness and feeling without feelings. At first she was in home waters and then proceeded to the Mediterranean at a time when the passage of a convoy involved "a major Fleet operation" and Admiral Somerville signalled, "The Chaplains of the Fleet will pray for fog." She remained there during the Crete campaign, about which we are told much. Then the author was transferred to an aircraft carrier and "experienced" America. His humour is as sound as his humanity. He recognizes the quality of men and of ships—"It would be a fool who would deny a ship has a soul. . . . As the gulls flew around her, the weather-beaten ensign played in the wind, and the white wake broadened as she gathered way, you could not but feel that it was a sight with a good deal of self-respect." B. E. B.

Mrs. Lincoln

Though in the form of a novel, Miss ANNE COLVER's *Mr. Lincoln's Wife* (HARRAP, 9/6) is really a biography of Mary Todd, from her first meeting with Abraham Lincoln down to her return to America from Europe, sixteen years after his assassination. Miss COLVER has shown great industry in collecting her material and considerable skill in arranging it in a connected and readable narrative, but her tender hapless heroine bears very little resemblance to the woman Lincoln married. The real Mary Todd was short and strongly-built, with an obstinate bad-tempered mouth. She wanted a husband capable of making a name for herself, her instinct picked out Lincoln, and it was

probably his unconscious recognition that he needed such a stimulus which finally, after much hesitation and one definite rupture, made him yield to her pertinacity. As soon as they were married her temper, understandably enough, flared out; she was often so impossible that Lincoln preferred to spend the night on the sofa in his office rather than go back home, and on one occasion at least she chased him out of the house with a broom. There was much in him to exasperate a far milder woman. He had the free-and-easy manners of a frontiersman, he took no trouble to improve his appearance, and, like Socrates, he had the infinite patience and mild reasonableness which women find so trying. The disharmony between them did not cease when he became President, though it took a different form. Conscious that she did not shine as the President's wife, she became insanely jealous of him, and her incalculable outbursts of rage greatly increased the terrible strain of those years. All this is blurred or suppressed in Miss COLVER's narrative. Mary marries for love, not ambition, and is towed forlornly in the wake of Lincoln's destiny, longing for the tenderness and sympathy he can give to others but inscrutably withholds from her. When he returns from Richmond, the war virtually over, she puts on a blue silk dress in his honour, and he remarks casually "You're all fixed up to-night, Mother. . . . This isn't any special occasion, is it?" She turns miserably away, murmuring "No, nothing special, Mr. Lincoln." There is, however, much of incidental interest in the book—the panic in Washington after Bull Run, the Press attacks on Lincoln for keeping his eldest son out of the fighting line, and Mary Lincoln's last years of poverty and mental decay. H. K.

Allenby as Administrator

Some three years ago Lord WAVELL brought out the first volume of his biography of Lord Allenby—*Allenby: A Study in Greatness*; now, with a special effort, he has completed his task with *Allenby in Egypt* (HARRAP, 10/6). Allenby had his detractors, both as soldier and administrator, but chiefly in the latter capacity. "I know now why he is called the Bull," Lloyd George is reported to have said to King George V: "he has got into our Eastern china-shop and is breaking everything up." Subsequently our elder statesman, with considerable political courage, supported Allenby's views when the real facts were brought home to him. But Allenby did possess, let us say, the nobler taurine qualities. He was sent to Egypt in the May of 1919 as Special High Commissioner with a mandate to restore law and order as quickly as might be and, secondly, "to maintain the King's Protectorate on a secure and equitable basis." Very soon he recognized that the Protectorate was an impossible relationship between Great Britain and Egypt, but it took three years for the Government at home to come to the same conclusion. Some "unrepentant imperialists" still speak of him bitterly as the man who "sold the pass"—giving away our position in Egypt. His biographer justly remarks that there was no pass to sell: there was only a last ditch that some foolish people might have died in—a fate from which Allenby's common sense preserved them. Common sense, indeed, was his outstanding characteristic. A soldier of the Wellington type, courageous, straightforward, fairminded, with a certain simplicity, Allenby was also a scholar and a lover of nature. Like Lord Grey of Fallodon, he loved birds, and was devoted to fishing, though his methods with the dryfly were once described by a water-bailiff as "a trifle military." To sum up, Lord WAVELL has completed a sound piece of work. His two volumes of biography make a fine tonic for the times. L. W.



"I suppose if I was some glamorous film-star you'd shower me with all the kippers I wanted."

The Trajedy of Tonkins

By Smith Minor

I DON'T think I have ever men-shuned O. Tonkins to you, and as this artickle is going to be about him it seemed to me that I ouht to begin with a discription of him to work your interest up. But when I told Green what I was going to do he thort I was wrong.

"Discriptions are dull," he said, "you don't work a person's interest up with them, you work it down."

"Not if it's of a boy like Tonkins," I said.

"It dosen't matter who it's of," he said, "you ask ten poeple out of ten

if they like discriptions, and see what they say. Look at Scott."*

"I grant you that," I said, having to, "but more poeple read Scott than read me, or did once."

"Not becorse of the discriptions," said Green. "You may like a person with a whart on his forrid, but that dosen't mean you'll get away with one yourself. Believe me, young Smith, I've been watching your work lately, and it seems to me you've been taking some grave risques."

*Sir Walter Scott, b. 1771, d. 1832.—*Author.*

"I remember doing it once," I said, it being the time I wrote about the conjurer, you may remember it, "but no one said anything, and if I did it too offen wuoldn't the editor tell me?"

"He wuoldn't have time to," said Green, "he wuold jest drop you like a hot brique."

Well, I grant you that woried me, but I still felt it wuoldn't be cricket to ask readers to what's called perewse an artickle about somebody they didn't know anything about, I mean the kind of artickle this will be if it turns out the way I mean it to, so what I had to do was to try and find some way of being fair without being dull, and below is the way I found. I got Green to discribe Tonkins in poetry, he being better at it than me, in fact, being hot. Well, anyway, this is the poetry, i.e.:

CONCERNING O. TONKINS

Some men are born with beauty
And some are born with gold,
And some are born for Duty,
Thouh all end in the mold.
What Tonkins (O.) was born for
Is still a cause of doubt;
For thirteen years one's wondered,
And never yet found out.
Imagine a white beatel
That's grown to boy's estate,
Put spectacles upon its nose
And red hair on its pate.
Imagine when it's talking,
Its voice is like a crow
That's down with tonsclitis—
Well, such is Tonkins (O.).

And if that dosen't wake you up, well, honestly, I don't know what will.

There is jest one other thing about Tonkins wich Green cuoldn't work into the poem but wich I feal you ouht to know, not about his looks this time, but his nacher. He means well, none better, but you can't get away from it, he's depresing. Put him in a cricket team, and you feal you've lost before you begin. Take him for a walk, and you can bet you are in for gloomb. Enclude him in a party, and lo! it will be a flop! So the reader can guess without much difficulty that poeple don't exactly flock around him.

But that is the reason why Green and I are interested, becorse is there anything worse than loneliness? You may think yes, but we think no, wich is really why Green and I have each other. Anyhow, one of our New Year resolutions was to keap an eye on Tonkins and to try and chear him. I take Mondays, Wenesdays and Fridays, and Green takes Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and we have Sundays off.

Well, it was on one of my Mondays

that the queer ephisode I am going to tell you about started. I came upon Tonkins looking even more dejected than usual and rubbing his forrid, and as he hadn't got his glasses on I said to him in the happy voice Green and I always use when talking to him, "Hallo, Tonkins, old man. Lost them?"

"Lost what?" he said.

"Your glasses old man," I said.

"No," he said, and he took them from his pocket, showed them to me, and then put them back again.

"Oh," I said.

Well, as he hadn't lost his glasses I couldn't cheer him up by finding them, and not being able to think of anything else I went away again, and that Monday was what you might call a wash-out.

But Tuesday was a washer-outer for Green, and when he came to tell me about it, becorse we always compared notes in the evenings, he looked as solemn as a whole roomful of owls. In fact, his first words were,

"I'm getting realy worried about Tonkins."

"So was I yesterday," I said. "What was he like to-day?"

"When I came upon him," he said, "he was sitting with his head on his hands in a pequlier sort of way and his elbows on his knees."

"Perhaps he'd had some bad news," I said.

"That's what I thort," he said, "so after waiting seven minits I said, 'Hallo, old man, is there anything I can do for you?' and he said, 'No,' and then I said, 'Are you sure?' and he said, 'Quite sure,' so then I said, 'I beleive the war will be over by next Christmas,' and then he said, 'Good,' and so then I left him."

"Perhaps he's getting mumps," I said.

"He seamed to be swallowing all right," he said.

"Cuold you see his neck?" I said.

"No," he said.

"Then how cuold you tell?" I said.

"That's true," he said. "Well, anyhow, if he's getting mumps, it's your turn to see him to-morrow."

Luckily I've had mumps, I mean luckily now, not when I had them, and so on Wednesday I made the usual point of bumping into him, and got a bit of a shock. I found him blinking, not in an ordinery way, but in a way that somehow reminded me of a fish that had sudenly been given eyelids and was trying them, and he had a watch in his hand. He was blinking once every five seconds. I timed the blinks with my own watch, or rather the watch of a boy called Perriwhistle,

he having lent it to me for a week in exchange for me lending him a pen-knife for a fortnight. As he didn't pay any attenshun to me, Tonkins not Perriwhistle, I let him go on for a bit, and then I said,

"Are you all right, old man?"

"Go away," he said.

"Well, why not?" I said.

And so did.

When I told Green, he said,

"I think he's going dippy."

"So do I," I said, "only I thort that if you weren't born dippy, you didn't go till much later."

"Go where?" he said.

"Dippy," I said.

"You can go dippy at any time, if you're loanly," he said.

"So you can," I said, thinking of my aunt, thouth she has a parrot, I having given her one in the hope that it wuold cure her, and then I got another thort, and I said, "And I suppose you can also be loanly becorse you've gone dippy."

"Smith, I think you've hit it," said Green. "Tonkins has always been dippy, and that's why he's loanly, and now his dippiness is bursting out of him in full force!"

It was a solemn thort.

"Then hadn't we better be a bit careful?" I said.



"Four listeners submitted all-correct solutions and each will receive a cheque for £62 10s. Here are their names: J. Huxley, C. E. M. Joad, A. B. Campbell and R. T. Gould."

"I think we had," he said. "In fact, insted of seeing him seperately, I think we now ouht to act like the police do when going throuh dangerous streets, and work in cupples."

"You can't get away from it," I said.

So next day, insted of Green seeing Tonkins alone, I went with him, and lo! what do you suppose we found him doing? You may not beleive it, but can one help that? He was standing before a picture of a ship and swaying from side to side!

Well, Green and I looked at each other, and then, thouth we were a cupple, we acted, as they say, like one man. We went up to him and we each took hold of one of his arms to stedly him.

"Now, everything's all right, old man," said Green.

"As right as rain, old man," I said.

"So don't you worry," said Green.

"There's abserlutely no nead," I said.

"You'll soon be fealing better," said Green.

"Of corse you will, you're as sane as we are," I said.

And then he said,

"In that case, I must be off my nut."

"What?" we said.

"Are you both dippy?" he said.

"Come to that, aren't you?" we said.

"I will be, if you don't stop following me about whenever I'm doing my eye exercises," he said.

After a bit of a pawse, Green said,

"He's right, Smith. You and I are dippy. But please, Tonkins dear, tell us more."

So then he told us he was trying to cure himself of wearing specktales, and that this was one of the exercises for eye-strane.

"Try it," he said. "First with your eyes open and then with them closed."

Well, we did. All three of us went from side to side, side by side. And when it was over, I remembered that I'd had a headache worrying about Tonkins, and now, lo! it was gone!

Of corse, the morale of this is, never juje anybody till you know.

Note. It neadn't be a picture of a ship, it cuold be of a cow-shed or anything, but Tonkins chose a ship becorse it helps you to sway. End of note.

o o

"12.0 midnight—12.20 p.m.

Time, Greenwich: NEWS"

Radio programme.

In the last hour and twenty minutes they run through the headlines again.

My Laundry

AFTER the war, if I have the time and the money, I shall take six months off and go round collecting my laundry.

I have laundry to collect in a number of places. One of the disadvantages of a sailor's life is that he is here to-day and gone before he can get his washing back. When you leave a bundle of soiled linen you cannot place a time-limit on it. In the Navy they rather encourage reticence concerning movements. You may not go into the laundry-office and lean confidentially over the counter and say out of the side of your mouth, "Look here, I simply must have this little lot back by to-morrow midday because we're sailing at midnight." The most you can do is to say you want it back as soon, please, as they can possibly manage it. And as every customer says just this it is of little help in gaining preferential treatment for you.

At Devonport there are two blue-jean collars waiting for me, and at Portsmouth there are three more. Relics, these, of the days when I was a very new rating and had yet to master the art of dhobi-ing a blue-jean collar so that the dye doesn't run and suffuse the whiteness of the three tapes bordering it. At different places in Scotland there is a total of five white shirts, eighteen handkerchiefs, fifteen

collars, and seven and a half pairs of socks. Gibraltar is holding for me one white drill uniform, two pairs of white shorts, two white open-necked shirts, two white cap-covers, two pairs of white socks and three ditto stockings. In Algiers—in my time a rather less dressy place—I own stock to the extent of a pair of khaki shorts, two khaki shirts, two khaki cap-covers, and one tobacco-pouch (inadvertently left in a breast-pocket of one of the shirts). At Bone, farther along the coast, there are three more shirts, but luckily two of these were only borrowed.

(Also, at Oban, I have a pair of black shoes being repaired, and I hope to collect these as well if there is anything left out of the six months.)

I am most doubtful perhaps about the Algerian deposit, because I can't remember the way to the place I took it to. I was conducted there by a small boy in a tarboosh and trousers of which only the rims remained, whose primary interest was to tell me all about his sister, but who subdued his commendable family pride and consented to lead me to a laundry as a sideline. You walk up a lot of stone steps to get to it, and you turn off past a barrow of oranges, but these are the only directions I can offer—I recall now that you also pass a date-vendor somewhere on the way.

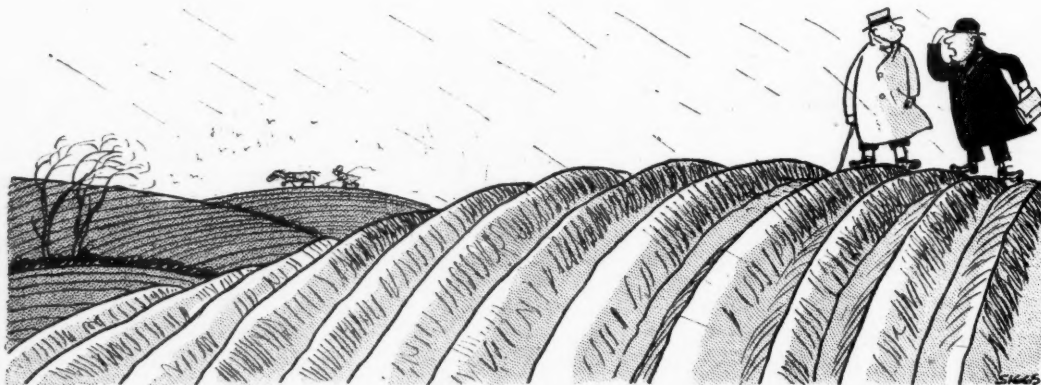
I am in no such doubt over the Gibraltar laundry. I went there with hopeful regularity nearly every day for some weeks, but it was always to be ready "mañana." If, on my excursion,

I leave Gibraltar to the last, I may find that "mañana" has finally arrived and my washing is ready for me.

My Scottish tour promises to be slightly more comprehensive than the itinerary of Mr. H. V. Morton. But it is laundry that I shall be in search of. I shall be glad to see Troon again, although, as I am not a golfer, this particular batch of laundry may be rather wasted on me. There is another small harbour in the Western Highlands that is, I can see, going to cause me some difficulty, as I know even less about the laundry here than I do about the laundry at Algiers. I gave my washing to one of the crew to take ashore for me, and he has since left the ship without giving me the address. So I have very little data to go on in this case.

I should mention that in Belfast an entire uniform awaits me. But is it going to be worth while travelling to Belfast to regain possession of this? Frankly, I doubt it. My waist-line occupies more of my belt than it used to. Almost certainly that uniform is no longer the best of fits. Also, by the time I am free to go and collect it I shall no longer be entitled to wear it.

And, now that I come to think of it, this perhaps applies to all my caches. But no matter. It makes me feel unspeakably affluent, a sort of present-day Beau Brummell, to have so much clothing, if not actually in my possession, at least legally not very far out of it.




"Now THIS year you may suddenly have to build houses on it."

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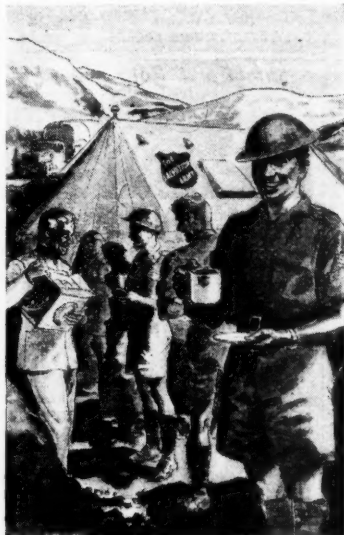
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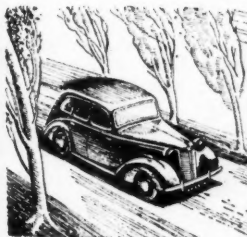
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WILKINSON'S LIQUORICE ALLSORTS



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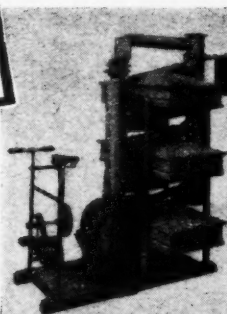
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